

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
BOARD OF REGISTRATION IN NURSING

FACULTY VACANCIES AMONG BOARD-APPROVED
NURSING EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN MASSACHUSETTS

Spring 2002 Survey

Summary

Nursing program administrators nationwide are reporting increases in faculty vacancies as well as growing difficulties in recruiting qualified faculty, particularly those with specific clinical expertise. Nursing program administrators in Massachusetts have cited similar concerns, noting that increasing retirements due to an aging faculty workforce coupled with early retirement incentives available to faculty at publicly funded institutions account for many vacancies.

Nursing faculty shortages have also been attributed to private-sector academic and clinical settings attracting current and potential nurse educators. However, no data are available to describe the extent of the nursing faculty shortage among the 60 nursing education programs currently approved by the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Nursing (Board). As a result, the Board surveyed administrators of Massachusetts basic nursing education programs in March and April 2002 to collect and analyze such data.

A total of 49 (82%) Board-approved programs responded to the survey by mid-April:

- 36 (73%) program respondents were publicly funded.
- Practical Nurse programs projected a *decline* in the total number of budgeted full-time equivalent (FTE) vacancies from 19% for the 2001-2002 academic year to 11% for the 2003-2004 academic year.
- Registered Nurse faculty FTE vacancies are expected overall to *increase* in number to 52.3 for the 2002-2003 academic year, falling slightly to 44 for the 2003-2004 academic year.
- The majority of programs projected level or increased number of student enrollments.
- Retirement was rated overall as the factor most frequently contributing to pending faculty vacancies followed by moves to other academic institutions, and program change or expansion. Factors differed by program type.
- Salary range was rated as having the most significant impact on a program's ability to recruit qualified faculty to fill pending vacancies overall followed by a shortage of qualified applicants, competition with clinical settings, and administrative requirements. Factors differed by program type.
- Pediatrics and obstetrical nursing were cited most often as clinical specialties most difficult to recruit qualified faculty to teach with 29% of diploma and associate degree programs also reporting difficulty recruiting qualified faculty to teach psychiatric nursing.
- Three themes emerged based on respondent comments: faculty applicants lack nurse educator role preparation; part-time instructors are difficult to locate to teach clinical or for coverage; and workload compensation.

The results of the Board's Spring 2002 Nursing Faculty Vacancy study provide important data for policy development to assure an on-going sufficient supply of graduates prepared for safe, competent, entry-level nursing practice. Legislators, regulators, higher education administrators, collective bargaining units, nursing program faculty and health care providers statewide are key stakeholders in the long-term collection and analysis of such data.

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2001-2002 Through 2003-2004

Spring 2002 Survey

Introduction

Nursing program administrators nationwide are reporting increases in faculty vacancies as well as growing difficulties in recruiting qualified faculty, particularly those with specific clinical expertise. Nursing program administrators in Massachusetts have cited similar concerns, noting that increasing retirements due to an aging faculty workforce coupled with early retirement incentives available to faculty at publicly funded institutions account for many vacancies.

Nursing faculty shortages have also been attributed to private-sector academic and clinical settings attracting current and potential nurse educators. However, no data are available to describe the extent of the nursing faculty shortage among the 60 nursing education programs currently approved by the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Nursing (Board). In an effort to assure effective, evidence-based policy development, the Board surveyed administrators of Massachusetts basic nursing education programs in March and April 2002 to collect and analyze such data.

Methodology

Adapting the California Strategic Planning Committee for Nursing Colleagues in Caring: Regional Collaboratives for Nursing Work Force Development Anticipated Need for Faculty survey tool, the Board designed a two-page, eight-item questionnaire. The survey tool requested data related to the number of filled and vacant budgeted full time equivalent (FTE) nursing faculty positions for the 2001-2002 academic year. In addition, data related to the anticipated number of vacant nursing faculty FTEs for the 2002-2003 and 2003-2004 academic years was requested. Respondents used the FTE calculation formula developed by the Interagency Conference on Nursing Statistics to calculate faculty FTEs.

The survey was mailed to the administrators of all Board-approved nursing education programs (N=60) with the Board's *Spring 2002 Update to Nursing Education Programs* in early March 2002. A reminder was then distributed to non-respondents by fax on April 8, 2002. A total of 49 (82%) Board-approved programs responded to the survey by mid-April: 18 of 20 (90%) Practical Nurse programs and 31 of 40 (78%) Registered Nurse programs, including 17 of 21 (81%) hospital-based diploma and associate degree programs, and 14 of 19 (74%) baccalaureate and higher degree programs.

Results

Type of institution offering nursing education program

Thirty-six respondents categorized the type of institution offering the nursing education program as "public" (73%). The number of public institutions responding to the survey, by program type, are shown in Table 1.

Current and anticipated faculty vacancies

The number of budgeted FTEs for academic year 2001-2002 was calculated by combining the number of budgeted filled and budgeted vacant faculty FTEs. The total number of FTE faculty vacancies reported for the 2001-2002 academic year, as well as those anticipated for the next two academic years are listed in

Tables 2. Eleven Practical Nurse program respondents reported no vacancies for the 2001-2002 academic year. However, the remaining respondents from Practical Nurse programs reported 20 vacant FTEs for the 2001-2002 academic year, or 19% of the total FTEs budgeted. 2003-2004 academic year data indicated the number of FTE vacancies is expected to decline to 11.5 among responding Practical Nurse programs, or 11% of the total FTEs budgeted for 2001-2002.

The total number of FTE Registered Nurse faculty vacancies reported for the 2001-2002 academic year was 17.1, or 3% of the total FTEs budgeted. However, this number is expected to increase to 52.3 FTE vacancies for the 2002-2003 academic year, falling slightly to 44 FTE vacancies for the 2003-2004 academic year. Three-associate degree and four baccalaureate degree programs indicated they had no current or anticipated nursing faculty vacancies. However, nine-associate degree and two baccalaureate degree programs reported that although each currently had no nursing faculty vacancies, vacancies were expected beginning with the 2002-2003 academic year.

Current and anticipated student enrollment

Of the respondents providing data related to the program's student enrollment for the 2001-2002, 2002-2003 and 2003-2004 academic years (18 – Practical Nurse programs, 16 – hospital-based and associate degree programs, and 12 – baccalaureate and higher degree programs), two programs – one baccalaureate and higher degree program and one associate degree program – anticipate a decline in student enrollments for the 2002-2003 and 2003-2004 academic years. All other respondents reported no change or an increase in student enrollments for this period. Projected student enrollment data, by program type, are shown in Table 4.

Factors contributing to faculty vacancy

Retirement was rated as the factor most frequently contributing to pending faculty vacancies, according to 24 (49%) survey respondents. Other significant factors include moves to other academic institutions and program change or expansion. Table 5 summarizes, by program type, data describing the frequency with which factors were rated as most frequently contributing to pending nursing faculty vacancies.

Factors impacting recruitment of qualified faculty

Salary range was rated by 24 (49%) all program respondents as having the most significant impact on a program's ability to recruit qualified faculty to fill pending vacancies, followed by a shortage of qualified faculty within the program's geographic area. However, among Practical Nurse programs, a shortage of qualified applicants within the program's geographic area was the factor most commonly cited as most significantly impacting the program's ability to recruit qualified faculty to fill pending vacancies. An equal number of baccalaureate and higher degree program respondents rated salary range, competition with clinical settings and a limited supply of qualified applicants within the program's geographic area as most significantly impacting the program's recruitment abilities. Table 6 summarizes, by program type, data describing the frequency with which factors were rated as most significantly impacting a program's ability to recruit qualified applicants to fill pending nursing faculty vacancies.

Faculty vacancies filled in last twelve months

Of the 11 Practical Nurse programs reporting no FTE vacancies for academic year 2001-2002, four (4) indicated filling 1 to 1.1 FTE vacancies in the last 12 months while the remaining indicated filling no vacant FTEs. Those Practical Nurse program respondents reporting FTE vacancies for this period, however, indicated filling 1 to 2 FTE vacancies in the last 12 months. Among the diploma and associate degree programs reporting no 2001-2002 faculty vacancies, five (5) indicated filling 1 to 2 vacant FTEs in the last 12 months. Diploma and associate degree program respondents reporting 2001-2002 faculty vacancies indicated filling 0 to 3 vacant FTEs in the last 12 months.

Clinical specialties difficult to recruit

Pediatrics and obstetrical nursing were cited most often by survey respondents as clinical specialties most difficult to recruit qualified faculty to teach. Five diploma and associate degree program (29%) respondents also reported difficulty recruiting qualified faculty to teach psychiatric nursing.

Respondent comments

Respondents were provided an opportunity to comment. Three themes emerged: faculty applicants lack nurse educator role preparation; part-time instructors are difficult to locate to teach clinical or for coverage; and workload compensation. One respondent reported a reduction in admissions was possible in the near future due to a shortage of qualified clinical instructors to fill program vacancies. Hiring two adjunct instructors to fill an FTE, vacant due to retirement, was described by another respondent as an institutional response to the FTE vacancy. The respondent reported “prep time” compensation for adjunct faculty was not available. Respondent comments are included in Exhibit 1.

Findings

The results of the Board’s Spring 2002 survey of Massachusetts basic nursing education programs demonstrate an overall increase in the number of nursing faculty FTE vacancies among publicly funded Registered Nurse programs is expected for the 2002-2003 and 2003-2004 academic years while overall student enrollments are also anticipated to increase for the same period. Currently, almost one out of five budgeted FTEs is vacant among public Practical Nurse programs in Massachusetts. Although this number is expected to *decline* among Practical Nurse programs, Registered Nurse programs overall anticipate faculty FTE vacancies to *increase* at least three-fold overall, beginning with the 2002-2003 academic year.

The growing number of nursing faculty vacancies in Massachusetts is the result of retirements, relocation of faculty to other academic institutions, and program changes or expansion. Salary, a shortage of qualified applicants within the program’s geographic area, competition with clinical settings, and administrative requirements have the most impact on a program’s ability to recruit qualified faculty to fill pending vacancies. The lack of preparation for the nurse educator role among faculty applicants; the lack of available, qualified part-time instructors to teach clinical or to provide coverage; and workload compensation are common concerns among all nursing program administrators.

Qualified nurse educators with experience in pediatrics and obstetrical nursing are reportedly most difficult to recruit. Additionally, almost one-third of diploma and associate degree programs have difficulty recruiting nurse educators with experience in psychiatric/mental health nursing (many associate degree program faculty are required to teach more than one clinical specialty).

Educational and experiential qualifications for faculty appointments, as required by Board regulation, 244 CMR 6.04(2), are listed in Exhibit 2.

Conclusions

Entry-level nursing education programs in Massachusetts project continued growth in student enrollments in the next two years. However, the supply of qualified nurse educators will decline as a result of retirements among an aging nurse faculty workforce and a competitive health care market – a trend reflected among nursing programs nationwide. Publicly funded entry-level nursing education programs will be impacted by this decline most significantly. In addition, the Massachusetts Registered Nurse workforce reflects a limited pool of potential qualified nurse educators “in the pipeline” to fill future faculty vacancies.

The Massachusetts Colleagues in Caring Collaborative (CICC), in its 2001 survey of Massachusetts nurse licensees, noted 13.2% of Massachusetts Registered Nurses hold masters degrees. However, the mean and median age of the primarily female, Registered Nurse population is 45.7 and 47 years, respectively, and the majority plan to retire in their mid-60s. Most Registered Nurses do not plan to seek additional nursing education in the next two years. In addition, the age at which new Registered Nurses enter practice has significantly increased in the last several years, according to the CICC study. As a result, a decline in the future cadre of qualified, experienced nurse educators can be expected.

The CICC survey findings also indicate an employment rate currently of 87% among Massachusetts Registered Nurses, half of whom are employed full-time while 35% are employed on a part-time basis. 7% hold multiple positions. These data further suggest faculty recruitment difficulties.

Competition with clinical settings is a barrier to recruiting qualified nursing faculty. Results of the 2001 National Salary Survey of Nurse Practitioners indicate the average salary for Nurse Practitioners (NP) employed in health maintenance organizations and acute care settings is above \$65,000 with NP's in private practice averaging \$78,217. Survey results also indicate the average annual salary for Nurse Practitioners in Massachusetts is \$64,951. By contrast, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing reports masters prepared faculty earned an average salary of \$54,980.

The results of the Board's Spring 2002 Nursing Faculty Vacancy study, in conjunction with the Massachusetts Colleagues in Caring Collaborative Nurse Workforce Study, provide important data for policy development to assure an on-going sufficient supply of graduates prepared for safe, competent, entry-level nursing practice. Legislators, regulators, higher education administrators, collective bargaining units, nursing program faculty and health care providers statewide are key stakeholders in the long-term collection and analysis of such data.

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Table 1

Number of public parent institutions, by program type

| Program Type | Number public parent institution respondents | % respondents |
|---|---|--------------------------|
| Practical Nurse Programs (N = 18) | 17 | 94 |
| Diploma/Associate Degree Registered Nurse Programs (N = 17) | 13 | 76 |
| Baccalaureate and Higher Degree Registered Nurse Programs (N = 14) | 6 | 43 |
| Total Registered Nurse Programs (N = 31) | 19 | 61 |
| Total (N = 49) | 36 | 73 |

Table 2

2001-2002 Budgeted FTEs (Filled and Vacant), and 2002-2003 and 2003-2004 Anticipated FTE Vacancies

| | 2001-2002 | | 2002-2003 | | 2003-2004 | |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Program Type | Total budgeted FTEs | Vacancy % of total | Projected number FTE vacancies | Vacancy % of 01-02 total | Projected number FTE vacancies | Vacancy % of 01-02 total |
| Practical Nurse | 105.5 | 19% | 17.5 | 17% | 11.5 | 11% |
| Diploma/Associate Degree Registered Nurse Program | 200.2 | 4% | 33.8 | 17% | 31.6 | 16% |
| Baccalaureate and Higher Registered Nurse Degree | 309.3 | 3% | 18.5 | 6% | 12.4 | 4% |
| Total Registered Nurse | 509.5 | 3% | 52.3 | 10% | 44 | 9% |

Table 3

Number of projected student enrollments, by program type

| Practical Nurse Program | | | Diploma/Associate Degree Registered Nurse Programs | | | Baccalaureate and Higher Degree Registered Nurse Programs | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------|--------------|---|--------------|--------------|--|--------------|--------------|
| <i>01-02</i> | <i>02-03</i> | <i>03-04</i> | <i>01-02</i> | <i>02-03</i> | <i>03-04</i> | <i>01-02</i> | <i>02-03</i> | <i>03-04</i> |
| 574 | 707 | 720 | 2151 | 2422 | 2407 | 2216 | 2379 | 2367 |

Table 4

Factors rated as most frequently contributing to pending nursing faculty vacancies, by program type

| Factor | Practical Nurse Program | Diploma/ Associate Degree Registered Nurse Program | Baccalaureate and Higher Degree Registered Nurse Program | Total |
|---|--------------------------------|---|---|--------------|
| Retirement | 7 | 12 | 5 | 24 |
| Move to another academic institution | 4 | 3 | 3 | 10 |
| Program change/expansion | 3 | 5 | 2 | 10 |
| Return to clinical practice | 1 | 0 | 3 | 4 |
| Other | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| Return to school | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

Table 5

Factors rated most significantly impacting program ability to recruit qualified applicants

| Factor | Practical Nurse Program | Diploma/ Associate Degree Registered Nurse Program | Baccalaureate and Higher Degree Registered Nurse Program | Total |
|---|--------------------------------|---|---|--------------|
| Salary range | 6 | 12 | 6 | 24 |
| Too few qualified applicants/geographic area | 9 | 7 | 6 | 22 |
| Competition with clinical settings | 2 | 2 | 6 | 10 |
| Administrative requirements | 5 | 3 | 2 | 10 |
| Competition with other academic institutions | 1 | 2 | 5 | 8 |
| Other | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |

EXHIBIT 1

Spring 2002 NURSING FACULTY VACANCY SURVEY RESPONDENT COMMENTS

Practical Nurse Programs

- Because of program's part time nature, there are not FTE requirements. Have authorization for 40 instructors. Staffing contingent on student load which is variable. Obstetrics and Pediatrics not in demand in military
- Additional graduate nursing education programs needed; RNs pursuing NP Masters; new faculty not prepared to develop curriculum, evaluation tools or to write course objectives
- Administrator position open; many applicants but few are qualified (lack nursing education experience)
- Nursing shortage reflected more proportionately within nursing education milieu
- Difficult to find faculty in our area with some education or leadership experience Need part time graduate programs to prepare faculty in instructional methods, curriculum develop and evaluation
- Adjunct instructors for semester needs difficult to find
- Difficult to find part time instructors for coverage
- Lack of benefits for part time position; only 1 full time instructor

Diploma and associate degree programs

- Difficult to locate qualified faculty for adjunct positions
- All nursing students need Masters prepared faculty; skill needed to mentor "new" student who are less prepared
- Regulation require baccalaureate and masters in nursing still a problem [*Note: this requirement was expired 7/1/98*]
- Must fill FTE, vacant due to retirement, with two adjuncts; other issue is refusal of community colleges to pay for evaluation and prep time for adjuncts. This year had full time medical surgical vacancy and 4 well qualified candidates. Also, lack of recent clinical experience and lack of education/teaching background; need program for educators
- Keys: early and concentrated recruitment; salary; use of faculty "grapevine"
- Qualified full time faculty not problem. Masters prepared part time faculty scarce; need to hire baccalaureate in nursing for part time
- Difficult to find qualified faculty for clinical
- Request approval to hire matriculated masters in nursing students for part time positions in associate degree programs
- Part time faculty moving to another position in academia contributes to vacancies
- Shortage of masters in nursing prepared clinical instructors; close to reducing admissions due to qualified clinical instructor shortage; expect full time vacancies due to retirements beginning 2006
- Support for workload consideration of the depth of nursing responsibility and time involved weekly for clinical preparation. Support for bargaining agreement would help recruitment
- Part time masters prepared faculty difficult to find

Baccalaureate and higher degree Programs

- Low salary and high responsibility of faculty, especially clinical, do not attract qualified faculty
- Too many masters prepared RNs are NPs; growing lack of qualified faculty with any education preparation
- Terminal degree is Masters, not doctorate so instructor must leave; qualified via credentials but some not teaching in Masters level area of expertise

- Difficult to attract NPs
- Competition with clinical practice most significant impact on recruitment; generally get sufficient part time faculty; full time more difficult - compete with Boston and Providence
- University requires Ph.D.; not enough PhDs in US
- Major needs are for primary care faculty; difficult to attract qualified family, pediatric, community health faculty and gerontology faculty

EXHIBIT 2

244 CMR 6.04(2): Faculty Qualifications

| Qualification Criteria | Practical Nurse Programs | | Registered Nurse Programs | |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|---|--|
| | <i>Administrator</i> | <i>Instructor</i> | <i>Administrator</i> | <i>Instructor</i> |
| Massachusetts RN Licensure | Current - good standing | Same | Same | Same |
| Academic credential | Masters or doctorate in nursing | Baccalaureate or masters in nursing | Same as Practical Nurse program administrator | Masters or doctorate in nursing |
| Practice | Minimum 5 years full-time experience or equivalent in last eight, with minimum 3 years experience in nursing education | Minimum 2 years full-time experience or equivalent in last five years and evidence of competence in area of instruction | Same as Practical Nurse program administrator | Same as Practical Nurse program instructor |